

Partnered in Teaching and Learning: Shared Experiences

Summary of virtual panel event held on
September 23rd 2021

[[Link to video](#)]



The past year has been defined by adjusting our approaches to teaching and learning during the pandemic. Through this period, McMaster learners and educators explored new ways of connecting, new opportunities for engaging with content, and new ways to think about the teaching and learning experience. As we begin a new academic year, we reflect on what we have learned, what we can build upon and what initiatives can be nurtured in alignment with the new Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy to advance teaching and learning at McMaster.

Panelists:

Susan Tighe: Provost and Vice President, Academic.

Kim Dej: Acting Vice Provost, Faculty.

Caroline Seiler: President, Graduate Student Association.

Denver Della-Vedova: President & CEO, McMaster Students Union.

Panel Questions:

How have the experiences of the past year highlighted the importance of having a dedicated Teaching and Learning Strategy?

What challenges have we overcome or adapted to that will support our goals related to the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy?

What excites you about the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy?

What role can students, faculty and university leadership play in contributing to the success of the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy?

5 Key Takeaways from the panel

1. The Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy highlights and showcases the importance of innovation in teaching and learning. It stresses the need for instructors, researchers, and teaching assistants in developing a holistic student experience, assessing and reinventing traditional teaching methods, and engaging students as partners in their learning. [15:30-17:16]
2. The past year has sparked the community in thinking about different ways of teaching and learning and revealed different areas for improvement outside of the classroom. This was the best time for the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy to come in as it now provides a framework for discussions regarding these topics and allows us to learn from each other. [22:10-23:30]
3. Graduate students play a critical role in the success of the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy because they are at the intersection of teaching and learning as teaching assistants and students themselves. [26:28-26:37]
4. At the core of the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy are the students. We can learn from them and work with them to shape the learning experience for future students. [58:49-59:03]
5. The best way we can advance as an institution is if we work together. As instructors we need to listen to our students and treat them as partners. As students we must provide feedback, and as a community we must reflect on what we are doing as a whole. [42:14-42:42]

Some key takeaways from each panelist

Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice President, Academic

- As we get back to Mac, it is important to reflect on the methods of delivering curriculum that were used last year and incorporate the most effective practices in the future. [17:40-18:08]
- With any challenge we face as an institution, including those from the past year, it is important to assess what is causing these challenges which could be due to systemic or operational issues. [41:52-42:49]
- In order for this strategy to be successful, we all need to be involved in implementing our goals and foster a culture where it is okay to try new things and be innovative. [45:11-46:09]
- The new Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy acknowledges how far we have come and how far we need to go. It provides us with the opportunity to be innovative and showcase how McMaster is a leader in teaching and learning. [1:04:52-1:06:13]

Kim Dej, Acting Vice Provost, Faculty

- The Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy allows us to reflect on teaching and learning strategies outside of the reactive ongoing pandemic. It provides a framework for understanding what worked and what didn't work this past year, which we can use as a launch point for doing things intentionally this year. [21:30-22:06]
- The past year impacted many aspects that are addressed in the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy. This includes experiential learning opportunities, the teaching and learning environment, assessments, and the student experience. We were able to adapt by using digital tools, altering testing, and prioritizing student well-being. [29:40-34:52]
- Partnerships between staff, faculty, and students are embraced in the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy. They can be found in places such as faculty supporting each other through peer observation, the Students as Partners Program, McMaster's interdisciplinary programs/minors. [52:42-55:05]
- The Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy will help us change the culture around professional teaching practices and promote one that involves experimentation, risk taking, reflection, and understanding of the student experience. [55:43-57:09]

Caroline Seiler, President, Graduate Student Association

- The past year has shown how resourceful they in pivoting teaching and learning strategies. With the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy in place, it provides guidelines for graduate students on how to pivot moving forward and makes these plans more concrete. [25:18-27:21]
- The GSA's new anti-oppression policy promotes inclusive campus as highlighted in the Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy. [35:12-36:18]
- As teaching assistants, graduate students can contribute to the success of the strategy by keeping its principles in mind when fulfilling duties. As students, they can act as a bridge between students and instructors. [48:36-50:23]
- The Partnered in Teaching and Learning Strategy puts an emphasis on innovation and encourages graduate thesis students to not only focus on their research but also their teaching practices. [1:00:36-1:02:01]

Denver Della-Vedova: President & CEO, McMaster Students Union

- The strategy allows us to explore both in-person and online modes of teaching and learning. Being forced to struggle has forced a lot of innovation in teaching methods and having a formal strategy provides a series of steps to success. [19:37-20:16]
- Undergraduate students faced many challenges last year including methods of assessment, communication, and engagement. Many methods and platforms were explored and now we can work towards finding a balance between them. [37:40-39:51]
- Folks are encouraged to be part of the conversation around teaching and learning if they want to help see the changes they want to see in the university. This involves receiving, synthesizing, and implementing feedback from students. [47:54-48:02]
- Students benefit in many ways from the strategy (i.e. interdisciplinary and experiential learning, active and flexible learning spaces, personalized student experience). [58:30-1:00:18]

Referenced Resources:

[Partnered in Teaching and Learning: McMaster's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2021-2026](#)